GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:608
ANSWERED ON:05.05.2003
BAN ON USE OF ASBESTOS
AKBOR ALI KHANDOKER

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government had set up an Inter-Departmental Committee on banning the use of asbestos in various products;

(b) If so, the number of meetings held by the Committee so far and when it is likely to submit its report?

(c) whether the Government are aware that UNEP/WHO/ILO in their reports from time to time considered all forms of asbestos as carcinogenic; and

(d) If so, the steps the Government propose to take to create public awareness in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a),(b),(c) & (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a),(b),(c) &(d) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 608 T ANSWERED ON 05.05.2003 REGARDING BAN ON USE OF ASBESTOS RAISED BY SHRI AKBOR ALI KHANDOKER.

(a)&(b) No, Sir. However, an Expert Committee consisting of Director, National Institute of Occupational Health, Director, Industrial Toxicology Research Centre , Director General of Mine Safety, Member Secretary, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and others was constituted to formulate a strategy on Indian asbestos industry from environmental angle. The Committee held one meeting and subsequently the matter was referred to CPCB for examining the issues comprehensively. CPCB has submitted its report in August 2002.

(c) The UNEP/ILO/WHO in its report on Chrysotile Asbestos (1998) has, inter alia, concluded that exposure to chrysotile asbestos poses increased risks for asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma in a dose-dependent manner and no threshold has been identified for carcinogenic risks.

(d) Steps taken for prevention and control of pollution of asbestos and creation of public awareness include the following:

- Public hearing has been made mandatory for all new/expansion/ modernization projects in asbestos sector, prior to environmental clearance under the provisions of Environmental Impact Assessment Notification, 1994 and its subsequent amendments;

- A Comprehensive Industry Document On Asbestos Products Manufacturing Industry including guidelinesfor environmental management has been prepared and widely disseminated for creating awareness; and,

- Emission limits have been stipulated for all types of asbestos manufacturing units (including all processes involving the use of Asbestos) under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

- The Bureau of Indian Standards has published several documents on guidelines relating to asbestos sector.